THEOSOPHY AND THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY . . .

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THEOSOPHY OR PARĀVIḌYĀ

FRIENDS:

The four lectures which are to be delivered here during the thirty-seventh Anniversary of the Theosophical Society are intended to place before the public certain views as to the meaning of Theosophy, as to the work of the Theosophical Society. Those of you who have had a programme will have seen that we begin to-day with the declaration that Theosophy is the Supreme Knowledge, the Parāviḍyā. Then to-morrow I am to speak of it as the Open Road to the Masters, the great Teachers of the WISDOM. On Sunday it is to be considered as the Root of all the great Religions. And lastly, on Monday, the Meaning, the Purpose, the Functions of the Theosophical Society.

Let me say at the very outset that while I shall try to put before you as well as I can that

which I believe to be true, no word I utter, no statement I make is binding on, or must be accepted by, any member of the Theosophical Society. The Society has no tenets, it has no beliefs that are binding on its members. The opinions of the President of the Society have no more authority within that body than the opinions of the lowliest member who is a Fellow of the Theosophical Society. We admit no authority save that of Wisdom, and every man must see the wisdom for himself. None other can reveal it to him; none other can walk for him along the path to realisation.

It is written in a Hebrew Scripture that no man may deliver his brother nor make agreement unto God for him; for between the supreme Spirit who is God and the fragment of that Spirit who is man there is no intermediary, there is none with the right to dictate. And so in our Society, while we seek the truth, we bid every member seek it and find it for himself; for truth is only truth when the intellect can perceive it; only then is it truth to any individual man; and the condition of knowing the truth, of seeing the truth, is to develop to the point whence that truth is visible. The moment you see it, you must believe it; until you see it, you

ought not to say that you know it. Hence the perfect freedom of our Society, the absence of all authority exercised over the minds of its members.

On the other hand, Theosophy, while not binding for acceptance on any member, is a great Truth, and, secondarily, a body of truths, that men may study, accept or reject according to their knowledge. And Theosophy in its primary meaning, Divine Wisdom, is the Brahmaviḍyā, the Āṭmaviḍyā, the Parāviḍyā.[1] Under any of these names it is known to the readers of the ancient Hinḍū books, and it is that knowledge, the highest knowledge, which I would strive, however feebly, to set before you in these days of our study.

One of the two real Founders of the Theosophical Society, known in Mr. Sinnett's book, *The Occult World,* under the initials of K. H., said that it was the mission of the Theosophical Society to bring the western nations to drink at the pure wells of Āryan knowledge. Under that name it is evident that the Master was alluding to that great treasure of Wisdom given to the Root stock of the Āryan race, brought

[1] The Science of the Eternal, the Science of the Self, the Supreme Science.

down by it into India, spread throughout India by that greatest son of India, Vyāsa, who, later, was the Lord Gauṭama the Buḍḍha.

In these ancient faiths, Hinḍūism and Buḍḍhism, together with that more fragmentary teaching which is all that has come down to us from the great Prophet of the third, or Iranian, sub-race—in these you have declared this Divine Wisdom with a fulness and particularity which you do not find in the younger faiths, and that for a reason ; because those younger faiths—the faiths of Christianity and of Islām—came into a world in which the supreme verities had long been declared and in which they were the common heritage of the whole of the fifth Root Race. Hence the Christ and the Prophet Muhammad gave more especially to Their followers lessons that were not emphasised so much in the earlier religions, lessons intended more for practice than for philosophy, as a guide to conduct more than as an illumination of the mind. For the illumination was present in the world for all who would to share it, and what the world of the young West wanted was a practical guide to life, and those great lessons of individuality and self-sacrifice which are the special glory of the Christian faith. Hence the command to lead

these to drink at those pure wells of Wisdom which belong to them as much as they belong to you; for they also are children of the Āryan Race, they also are descendants of Vaivasvaṭa Manu, and over them His protecting hand is spread as much as over the elder part of the Race. In taking that treasure of Wisdom westwards, we are only carrying it from the family house to the younger children who have colonised the outer world; we are not bringing to them what is not theirs, but family treasures to which they have a right; for those heirlooms belong to the younger as well as to the elder, and they may claim the right to wear them as much as any dweller in India, in Burma, or in any other of the northern and eastern lands.

Let us now for a moment consider three words that we find in one of the old books, the *Brahma-suṭras.* It is written therein: "Brahman is bliss." "The ETERNAL is bliss." To some extent, if you think, you will find that that fact—for you are a part of Brahman—that that fact is testified to you by your own experience, if only you try to realise the meaning of what you feel. Does not every one of you, when some sorrow falls upon you, ask: "Why has this sorrow come?" Do you often ask the same question

when some unexpected happiness falls to your lot, or do you not take the happiness for granted? Do you not feel that in the happiness you have that which is your right? Do you not expect to be happy, and do you not only question when unhappiness is your lot? "What have I done to deserve this?" you say indignantly when a sorrow strikes you. "What have I done to deserve this?" do you say when joy shines on you? "Oh, that is mine because I am a human being and joy is my natural atmosphere."

You are quite right. That instinctive feeling that you have a right to joy, and that sorrow has to be accounted for, wells up from the depths of the divine Spirit within you, who knows that he is bliss and knows naught of sorrow and pain. But when you look out into the world and, instead of feeling, begin to reason, ah! then you begin to question the truth of this great saying that Brahman is bliss. You look out upon the fields and the woods around you and you see the vast mass of sub-human consciousnesses; you see one animal preying upon another; you see the leopard springing upon the back of the spotted deer; you see the boa-constrictor winding himself around the animal passing beneath his tree,

and crushing all his bones together into an indistinguishable mass; you see the hawk dropping upon the wounded bird. You see pain, trouble, sorrow on every side, and you say: "What is this? 'Brahman is bliss,' and there is but One Life? What then of these tortured creatures? What then of these wounds and deaths?"

An English poet, as you know, has voiced that view in eloquent words, and has described Nature as red in tooth and claw; but I venture to say to you that the poet is wrong, and that he does not realise at all the life-side of nature. The life of the wild animal is a joyous life, and not a life of fear and pain. Listen to the bird as its whole little being swells in the delight of the sunshine, and a flood of music pours out from the throat of the songster that seems too mighty to come from the tiny throat that gives it forth. Watch the kitten as it plays upon the ground, as it leaps at every dancing leaf; and if there is naught else to play with, it goes round and round after its own tail, in sheer exuberance of the joy of life. Watch, as naturalists watch, the wild life of the field and of the forest where man is not. They will tell you, as they watch, that the life of the wild creatures is a life of joy; sickness is not there; death comes suddenly and

strikes away the body. They tell you that the animal can be seen well-nigh to laugh as it tricks its pursuer, and plays some skilful wile that throws the beast of prey from off its track.

The truth is that if we are to have evolution, the bodies must be struck away in some fashion in order that the life within expanding may have a new body as soon as it is ready to wear it. Would you say it was cruel that the mother, when she clothed the babe, did not tie the babe fast in the little garments that she made for it, and thus dwarf its future growth and make every increase of the baby body painful, as it strained against the constricting cloth? Or is it not wise, when the child outgrows the dress, to tear the dress in pieces and give a new one to the tiny form?

And so is death, looked at from the life-side of nature. The body has done its work; it is broken asunder and cast aside, that the life within may burgeon into new beauty, and a nobler body, better adapted for the growing life, may be taken on by the animal that was slain. Oh! if you will look at Nature without prejudice, without throwing your human consciousness into the animal consciousness, you will find that they are true, those words that I borrow from *Light on*

the Path: "Life is not a cry but a song"—a song in every plant that blossoms in the sunlight; a song from every bird that flits among the branches of the tree; a song from the tiny squirrel that leaps from branch to branch; a song from the bounding antelope, from even the creeping snake.

Only with man comes in sorrow, and where man is seen sorrow treads upon his heels. Now why? Because man is the first consciousness that reaches the point where, as the *Aiṭareya Brāhmaṇa* says of man: "He knows what occurred yesterday." Of man it is true that "he looks before and after," for he has memory of that which is past, anticipation of that which is to come; because he has much imagination, the creative force; and because he adds to his suffering the memory of past pain and the fear of future anguish. Try, if you have the strength of mind to do it when some pain is upon you, to turn away your mind from the pain and leave the body alone to suffer; and you will find the greater part of the pain has vanished, because the mind is no longer magnifying it and giving to it its own intensity of memory and of fear.

Man is sorrowful; I grant it, and the end of philosophy, we are told by Hinḍū Sages, is to

put an end to pain. For that all great philosophies are given, for that all mighty religious teachers teach. That man may rise above sorrow, he is taught how to look upon this world; and if a philosophy does not put an end to pain, then it is no true Wisdom, but only the foolish spinning of the mind.

There was a gracious Prince nearly twenty-five centuries ago, from the knowledge of whom all sorrow had been kept and in a garden of delights He spent His gladsome days. All that could be given of beauty and of love clustered around that gracious form, and earth brought all her treasures to make happy the one who was to become Teacher and was Prince. You know the story; how the Prince, whose life had been a fairy-tale, went outside His palace of delight, and met a beggar oppressed with poverty, near to starvation; met a leper, eaten up by horrible disease; saw an old man tottering palsied along the road; saw a corpse whence the life of man had fled; and you know that the sight of these sorrows of earth pierced that heart that had been lapped in joy, drove Him away from the side of His wife, from the protection of His infant child, made Him draw the sword to cut off His hair,

made Him cast aside the robes of the Prince and put on the cloth of the mendicant, sent Him out in solitude to desert and to forest to try, by starvation and austerity, by misery of the body, to find out the redemption of the soul.

You know how He outdid all other ascetics in His great austerities; how He became a mere skeleton, bones showing through the flesh stretched like parchment across them. How His heart, as the poet declared, "was broken with a whole world's woe"; and how beneath the Tree, forever sacred, He found the illumination of Wisdom, and came out from the seat beneath the Boḍhi-tree to turn the Wheel of the Law in the garden of the Gods. He found the Four Noble Truths; sorrow, the cause of sorrow, the ending of sorrow, and the noble eight-fold Path that leads to Nirvāṇa. So He proclaimed the way of escape by which man might pass from sorrow into bliss —for none who understand His teaching, having touched at least somewhat of the realities whereof He spake, think, as many of the Westerners think, that Nirvāṇa is merely an extinction. Did not the Lord Buḍḍha declare that if it had not been for Nirvāṇa, the uncreate, the eternal, the essential BEING, there could not exist the

create, the fleeting, the many transitory beings of the world?

We do not come forth from an emptiness but from a fullness, not from a void but from a plenum. Shall we, in whom God is incarnate, dream that aught but eternity is the heirloom of the human Spirit? We find that it is taught in that exquisite Upaniṣhaṭ, the *Shvetāshvaṭara*, with a simile which is full of suggestion: "When a man," it is written, "can squeeze together the ether like leather, then shall he find escape from pain without the knowledge of the ETERNAL."

The same idea underlies Mokṣha, Liberation, that underlies the Nirvāṇa of the Buḍḍhist—the knowledge of God, that puts an end to misery; useless all other efforts; futile all other searches. When you can take the viewless ether and squeeze it as an object, then and then alone shall you escape from pain without the knowledge of the ETERNAL. And to those two statements Christ adds another when He declares that the knowledge of God is eternal life. That is the Salvation of the Christian, the equivalent, rightly understood, of the Nirvāṇa of the Buḍḍhist and the Mokṣha of the Hinḍū; for the great Teachers all teach alike in essence, and if we understand Them not,

it is not Their fault but the fault of our ignorance. That knowledge of God which is eternal life, that Mokṣha which is Liberation, that Nirvāṇa which is the portion of the Jīvanmukṭa, that is not, as a Master said, a change of conditions, but of condition. That is, it is not a change in the outer phenomena that surround your life; it is not a change in the changing feelings which make up your emotions; it is not a change in the thoughts that come and go; it is a change which is Realisation, a change in the inner attitude of the Spirit himself.

That is the knowledge which brings bliss to man, that the knowledge which is the knowledge of the Supreme. It need not be in the future. A Christian Apostle said: "God *hath* given us eternal life." It has nothing to do with Heaven; it has nothing to do with Svarga; it has nothing to do with any Paradise; call it by whatever name you will, it is a change in the inner condition of the man, a change by which he knows himself, and knows himself as God.

And the books show it. When the Lord Buḍḍha had attained that which is beyond Nirvāṇa, He remained on earth and taught for five-and-forty years. When Janaka, the King, became a Jīvanmukṭa, he did not leave his throne

nor quit his royal city. When Ṭulaḍhāra, the grocer, reached Mokṣha, Liberation, he did not cease to sell his commodities, but in himself was life and wisdom. You need not leave the world, you need not leave your work, you need not leave your duties. The Kingdom of God is within you, and if you cannot find it there, it is nowhere to be found by you.

And so, if we turn to one of these great Upaniṣhaṭs in which the Āryan Wisdom is so magnificently taught, we may read therein of one named Shaunaka, who came to ask how he might gain knowledge and, finding the great Ṛṣhi, Aṅgiras, he said to him: "In whom, O Lord, He being known, may everything else be known?" And the answer came from the man who had attained to wisdom: "There are two things that ought to be known; thus have told us the knowers of the ETERNAL—the Supreme and the lower." In case the lay inquirer should not understand the two words, the "Supreme" and the "lower," he went on to say in what the lower consisted, and he gave first of all the names of the four Veḍas, the *Ṛk*, *Yajur*, *Sāma* and *Aṭharva*, and having named those four sacred Scriptures, he proceeded to name the six well-known Aṅgas of the Veḍas, the six great

sciences which will be well-known to you all. And then, having classed the whole of these as the "lower knowledge," he went on to declare that that Highest or Supreme Knowledge is that by which the Indestructible One is known. And then he described that Supreme, the knowledge of whom gave knowledge of all else; "He, the invisible, ungraspable, without family, without caste, without eye or ear, without hand or foot, the everlasting, all-pervading, all-permeating, very subtle, that inexhaustible, whom the wise see as the womb of beings."[1] Such was his wonderful description of the One, the knowledge of whom is the supreme knowledge, the only knowledge which is really worth having in the world. That is said to be the Parāviḍyā—that which in modern days we call Theosophy. And in words perhaps more familiar to some of you, in the great Scripture of the *Bhagavaḍ-Gīṭā*, it is declared by Shrī Kṛṣhṇa that "Constancy in the Wisdom of the Self, understanding of the Object of essential wisdom, that is declared to be the Wisdom; all against it is ignorance. I will declare that which ought to be known, that which being known immortality is enjoyed—the beginningless

[1] *Muṇḍakopaniṣhaṭ.* I, i. 3—6.

supreme ETERNAL, called neither being nor not-being."[1] In another passage He declared that those who know the ETERNAL have reached Self-knowledge, and are they who know Him verily, and are beyond life and death, liberated from both.[2]

So that we come to realise that the knowledge of the Self is the knowledge of the ETERNAL, and that they who know the God within know that which alone is worthy of the name of Wisdom.

Now what is the meaning of that ETERNAL, of Him who is bliss, knowing whom, we reach Liberation? Eternal is not unending time. Eternal is different from everlasting. For everlasting only means age after age in endless succession, while the Eternal is an ever-present Reality, above, Shrī Kṛṣhṇa said, being and not-being; and in these two words, the ultimate pair of opposites, He summed up all the pairs of opposites which make up the universe in which we live. Pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, these are the things that make up mortal life; but bliss is something other than unending joy. The pairs of opposites always exist together, and you must transcend the pairs of opposites before you can reach the Supreme.

[1] *Loc. Cit*, xiii, 11, 12.
[2] Cf. *ibid.* vii, 29, 30.

What is pleasure? Increase of life. What is pain? Diminution of life. What is joy? An elation coming from outside. What is sorrow? A pain that comes from without. They must perish. Pleasure and pain must go. Joy and sorrow must vanish. But beyond this there is Bliss, where there is no increase of life—for it is infinite; no decrease of life—for decrease of life to the infinite is impossible; where there is no sorrow, no fear, for it is all in all, all-embracing, and there is nothing external which can touch it, for all is within itself. The pairs of opposites come from the play of the outer universe on the inner Spirit. Bliss is above the pairs of opposites, and knows neither increase nor diminution. To live in the ETERNAL is to live in unchanging bliss; these sorrows and joys play around your feet; they cannot rise above your head. It is to have your feet on the rock of Eternity, and the waves of time may break against the rock, but they cannot wash you off it, for there your feet are fixed. To live in the ETERNAL is to be above the streams of time, so that none may touch that calm serenity of him in whose heart the ETERNAL ever abides. Thus we realise that to gain unending heaven would not be to live in the

Eternal, and that to win unending kingdoms upon earth would fall far below that radiant Bliss of the Eternal.

We ask how this supreme knowledge can be gained by man, and from the East the words come to you from those who have won it, and from the West also there is witness; for there we find one form of Christianity which is called Mysticism; this asserts direct communion with God and realisation of the divine Spirit within, the Self in man, the Self which is divine. Quite lately the Dean of the Cathedral of S. Paul, lectured upon Mysticism, and was commented upon by the *Times* newspaper, which was surprised at what the Dean declared; we find him saying: "Mystical experience is a solid fact, guaranteed by those who have had it." "But," says the *Times*, Mysticism was "commonly supposed to be an obsolete state of mind, or to persist only among the ignorant and sentimental." And then the Dean goes on to explain that Mysticism is "religion at first hand," not a teaching from outside but an unfolding from within; and he declares that the Mystic's faith "is more scientifically secure" than any other kind of faith. Not only does he make that statement, but in a later lecture he uses a phrase which reminds us in

startling fashion of one of the shlokas of the *Bhagavaḍ-Gīṭā*. He declares that a man who "was filled with water springing up into everlasting life could not very much care for the stagnant cisterns of tradition," of ordinary religious teaching. When you hear such words from the Dean of S. Paul's, when he speaks of these "stagnant cisterns of tradition," does there not rise in the minds of some of you that verse in the *Gīṭā*? "All the Veḍas are as useful to an enlightened Brāhmaṇa as is a tank in a place covered all over with water."[3] When you have water around you, you have no need for a tank. When God speaks within you, there is no need for any Scripture, however sacred, for any tradition, however ancient. Where the Supreme is known all else becomes but ignorance, and the man who has found the God within has no further need of teaching from aught that man may say.

And our Dean declares that the one great mystic experience is direct communion with God; every Mystic would confirm the statement. That is the object of the Mystic's efforts; that the crown of the Mystic's strife.

[3] *Loc. Cit.* ii, 46.

Suppose, then, that for the moment you realise that this possibility of direct communion with God is the beginning of Parāviḍyā, or Theosophy, that such communion is possible to man. You may say: How comes it to be possible; how can man know God? The answer is along the same lines of reasoning by which you obtain any other knowledge. You know the thing to which you can answer from within. If you are able to see this banyan tree, you see it because in your eye there is ether that can vibrate in response to the movements of the ether that you call the light. You cannot see it when light is not there; you can only see it when the vibrations of the ether produce in your eye the answering vibrations by which you become conscious of the presence of the tree.

And so with God. The human Spirit is a fragment of that mighty One who declares in the *Gīṭā*: "I established this universe with a fragment of myself and I remain"—a fragment of that Supreme to whom all universes are but as waves in His own great ocean, passing phenomena in the boundless sea of His life. That is your Self, your real Self—not the foolish body that binds you, not the surging emotions that confuse you, not the changing thoughts

that deafen you—but that which lies beyond them all. And because you are Spirit, you can reach the supreme Spirit; because you are of His Nature, you can answer to that which comes forth from Him; and so the poet apostrophised his own Spirit, and said to the Spirit within him:

> Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet;
> Closer is He than breathing, nearer than hands and feet.

Your hands are outside you; your feet are outside you; your breathing is outside you; your emotions and your thoughts are outside you. But God is within you, the Life of your life, the Essence of your Spirit.

And so we find over and over again that in these great Upaniṣhaṭs this teaching is repeated. But you may fairly say to me: Do they tell us how to gain the knowledge? For to know that there is knowledge to be had and not to reach it would only add a new grief to the pain of the world. But I find in these sacred books that the knowledge is clearly, is distinctly, given. Sink into the depths of your own being, and there you will find God. Turn to that wonderful passage in the *Kathopaniṣhaṭ*, where the man is told the steps of the road and the way in which

he should walk. It is the passage in which it is declared that "higher than the senses are verily their objects; higher than their objects is the mind; higher than the mind is the intellect; higher than the intellect is the Spirit; higher than the Spirit is the Unmanifested; higher than the Unmanifested is Puruṣha, . . . the Supreme Goal". Translate those last two words by the help of Theosophical explanation, and you have: first, the Unmanifested—the Monad immediately beyond the Spirit, or the triple Āṭmā, as the Spirit is sometimes called—the Monad who is the Witness, and beyond that Īshvara Himself, God, the Logos, who is one with the Spirit in man, since the Monad is part of Himself.

And then the Upaniṣhaṭ goes on to instruct you in what you should do. It begins in the outer world, where the senses are in touch with the objects of sense. And then it tells you to merge the senses in the mind, and the mind in the intellect, and the intellect in the Spirit, and the Spirit in the unmanifested Monad, and that in the supreme Īshvara Himself. That is the line of ascent. Another hint is given you as to method, for, earlier in the *Kathopaniṣhaṭ*, a graphic simile is given for instruction. The body, says the writer, is the chariot, and the

rider within the chariot is the embodied Spirit. The horses are the senses which pull along the chariot; and the mind is the reins whereby the horses may be controlled; the mind is the reins in the hands of the driver, who is the intellect. Then the Upaniṣhaṭ goes on to explain that unless the charioteer holds the reins of the mind firmly, he will have the uncontrolled horses of the senses plunging along over the roads of the objects of the senses; but if he is wise and with his intellect controls the mind, holding firmly the reins, then the senses will be quiet, as the well-broken horses of the charioteer. And then we are told that when the senses are conquered, when the mind is still, that then, in the quiet of the senses and the tranquillity of the mind, we may "behold the glory of the Self". There lies the Path.

But immediately after this Path has been described; immediately after man has been taught how he had best shape his efforts, so that he may go towards the great goal; then there rings out the statement: "Arise; awake find the great Ones and attend; for the wise tell us that the road to Him is hard to travel, and sharp as the edge of a razor." Not by himself may man travel that razor Path; not without

the help of the Teachers, of the Elder Brethren, may he hope to reach his goal.

So, when the Path has been depicted, he who would tread it is pointed to the Teachers, for only as They help the aspirant shall that razor Path be safely trodden to the goal. Hence it is that I shall try to show you to-morrow that Theosophy is the Open Road to the Masters, for of what avail to hold up the Parāviḍyā as that which is supremely desirable, unless some strong hand shall be extended to steady us as we try to tread that razor Path?

Again I find in these Upaniṣhaṭs the exact outline of that road. First, take in hand the control of the body. Sloth is your great enemy where the body is concerned. Inertia, ṭamas, that is your foe. Conquer that sloth of the body, so that it shall not be a hindrance in your future way. Then take in hand your senses, those parts of the body which have become differentiated in order to make channels whereby the objects of the outer world may reach the next sheath which clothes the Self, that we call the sheath of the desires and the emotions. How are you to conquer them? By the mind. You cannot wish for what you choose; wishing is beyond your power; desiring is beyond your

power. Desires surge up and carry you away like the unbroken horses that run away with the chariot.

How then to bridle those horses and pull them in? By the mind, the reins; in quiet times when the senses are at rest; in silent moments when the desires are asleep; when they do not torment you nor stir you to activity, then is your chance. Then turn the mind to meditation, and let it discriminate between the really desirable and the apparently desirable; let it realise by its own study that every contact of the senses is but a womb of pain; that as long as the senses rule, pain will follow on satisfaction, as night follows on the day. In those quiet moments listen to the voice of the mind, and use the mind to control the senses and to turn them to the really desirable, to that which is lasting instead of fleeting, which will be a womb of joy instead of a womb of pain.

Train yourself in meditation, and when you have conquered the senses—for until they are your slaves no further progress along this road is possible for you—when the senses are silenced, when they are no longer stirred by desires coming from the objects of sense, then hand over the mind to the intellect, the lower to the higher

man. Then let the lower mind be quieted; then let it be still as a lake without a ripple; for as a lake ripples under the wind, so does the mind ripple under the wind of desire, and the ruffled surface will reflect no object aright. But when the mind is still as a mirror, when the lake is quiet, then in the lake you can see the stars that are shining in the heaven, and in the mind you can see the image of the Self reflected down into it as into a mirror.

And when once you have seen the Self; when once you have realised the Self; then the desires and the mind will be silent, for there is naught that can affect that majesty. So you may read in the Upaniṣhaṭ that I quoted before —the *Shveṭāshvataropaniṣhaṭ*—you may read the wondrous description of Him who is found by the man who has conquered the senses and who is ruler of his mind. It is declared in that, that when the darkness of ignorance has gone, when the pairs of opposites have been transcended, then in meditation nothing remains save the ever-blessed One alone. "No image may be made of Him whose Name is infinite glory. Not for the sight exists His form, none may by the eye behold Him; but by devotion and knowledge He may be seen in the heart by

the mind, and who sees Him thus becomes immortal." That is the Parāviḍyā; that the very essence of Theosophy; man may know, and, knowing, may realise his own Eternity.

To that Realisation, to that Vision of the Supreme, to that Peace which knows no changing, to that Strength which knows no limit, may the ever-blessed Ones guide you who, listening to words so feeble, may translate them into beauty by the voice of the God within you. Such is the prayer of all who once have seen; and because some men have seen, other men also may see.

THEOSOPHY THE OPEN ROAD TO THE MASTERS

FRIENDS :

You will remember that yesterday we spoke of the supreme knowledge, of the knowledge which is Eternal Life, of the finding of that knowledge in the heart, the temple of the Supreme. And you may remember that with reference to that I quoted an ancient Word, that Word in which it is said: "Awake! Arise! Seek the great Ones and attend; for the wise tell us that the road to Him is hard to travel, and sharp as the edge of a razor." Quite naturally, then, we turn to-day to see whether Theosophy, which we found was identical with this Wisdom of God, has something to tell us as to how we shall seek the great Teachers, how we may find Them, in order that we may attend to Their teaching. And glancing back over the very distant reaches of history,

we find that at the time and in the countries where this Science of the Supreme was taught, there also the Teachers were to be found, so that there was no doubt for the searcher. If he sought, he would find.

In ancient India, in the literature from which I drew, yesterday, most of my illustrations, in that literature we find a tradition, a record of the past, which speaks of the great Teachers, calls Them by the name of Ṛṣhis, and looks to Them as the givers of Wisdom, as Those who can guide us along the razor path. And not only do we find Them mentioned in the literature, but there are certain facts that we cannot but observe, which lead us to the conclusion that the literature is an accurate record. We find certain books that go, as you know, by the name of Āraṇyaka, 'the forest,' that which was taught in the forest; and we have heard how these great Teachers wandered in forest ways, how bands of disciples gathered around Them, and that the very name 'Upaniṣhaṭ' came from the idea of sitting at the feet of a Teacher. Then we also find, when we look into other parts of the literature, like those compressed statements that are known as 'Suṭras,' or threads, that by themselves they are sometimes

well-nigh unintelligible; quite inevitably the idea is pressed upon the mind that they are the mere headings of discourses, that a Teacher spoke one of these great sentences and then expounded it, explained it, made his disciples meditate thereon, and so led them to find out all that lay hidden beneath the few and pregnant words. We find that in later times the lack of true Teachers was supplied, inadequately indeed, by the commentaries written by the learned and the scholarly; but when we read these, we find that while they are admirable in grammar, in logic, in the exposition of outer meaning, it is only now and again that some gleam of spiritual light breaks through the jungle of words, illuminates the obscurity of the passage. So much is that true, that I have sometimes advised the earnest student to shut up the commentaries, to place them on the shelf, to go and sit in meditation, and by meditating on the original words, to try to find out the depths of spiritual meaning that lie hidden therein, for him who has learned to conquer his passions and to control his thoughts. And looking at these great axioms under which mighty truths are put in tersest fashion, we seem to see, beyond the words, the speaker, the Master

of the Wisdom, pointing His children to the truth.

And when we look elsewhere in the older times, we find similarly that there were special Teachers who unrolled the supreme knowledge to the earnest and the pure. We may read in the Hebrew Bible of the School of the Prophets; how men gathered together that they might, under the training of an accepted Prophet, learn something of the divine Mysteries; for you must remember that in the older literature 'Prophet' does not mean specially 'Foreteller,' but rather the Teacher of the Hidden Knowledge, the man who had gained more of Wisdom than his fellows.

Then again we find in a country like Egypt, priests, a priesthood, who were holders of the secret knowledge. And those of you who know something of symbolism will remember that when you see on the double crown of Egypt the head and part of the body of the asp, the hooded head, you will remember that that was the sign of the organ in the forehead by which the third sight, the third eye, manifests itself as organ in the outer world; and that men only made the symbol out of gold and brass when that which it symbolised had been forgotten and the power that it indicated no longer existed.

And so you find this idea of Teachers to whom the would-be learner might go, and everywhere in the elder days there was the open road, the road along which the student might travel, the road which led him to the beginning of the Path where the Teacher was certain to welcome him. It was by that Gate which the Christ declared to be so strait, the entrance to that Pathway which He said was so narrow, it was by that Gate, ready to guide along that Pathway, that the Teacher stood revealed in ancient days.

And coming down nearer to our own day, but still far away, we find the Mysteries of Greece, of later Egypt, of Assyria, symbols in the lower world of those true Mysteries that have ever existed, and still exist, under the control of the great White Brotherhood, the Lodge of the Masters of the Wisdom. The Mysteries had various grades ; sometimes they were the way to real knowledge and real Teachers used them for the instruction of the learner. You may read in the writings of the Greek philosophers, like Plato, that those who were initiated in the Mysteries lost the fear of death and knew the certainty of immortality. You may come farther down the stream of time to the early days of the Christian Church, and there you will find the Mysteries of

Jesus, to which the Christian was admitted under rigid conditions of purity, of capacity to learn. And it is said in the older Christian writings —those that were written by the wise men called the Fathers of the Church—that in those Mysteries were passed on to the pupils the teachings that Jesus gave in secret to His own disciples. The whole ancient world is illuminated by these great places of revelation, and you find them lasting onwards into comparatively modern times, disappearing finally from Europe during the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries after the Christian era.

Now those Mysteries disappeared for lack of pupils, and the lack of pupils was not only due to ignorance and sloth among the people. It was also due to the growth of a spirit of persecution, as Christianity became linked with the State and grew orthodox and narrow—orthodoxy laying down certain conditions of membership in the Church, which threatened all that we were speaking of yesterday as Mysticism. To be a Mystic was to be suspected; to be a Mystic was to be in danger of civil and religious persecution; and when, under the Emperor Constantine, Christianity became the religion of the State, then the sword began to be sharpened,

and the prison doors began to swing back, and the sacred knowledge was branded as dangerous, and those who sought to know were denounced as mischievous to the State.

Hence, partly from fear, partly also from ignorance, pupils were lacking for these Mysteries of Wisdom; and since the Teacher could not teach without pupils, since the Master cannot reach those who are unwilling to be taught, gradually the exoteric belief took the place of the ancient knowledge, and faith in the dogmas of a Church took the place of faith in the God within the temple of the heart. And then, when we look about for the Teachers, we see that they are hard to find. They never really quite disappear. You find, here in India, Gurus worthy of the name wandering about from place to place with bands of earnest disciples. You find the Sūfīs among our brothers of Islām, who also possess the ancient Wisdom and give it to others in the ancient way. Strict the conditions, rigid the rules, for it is no mercy to give Wisdom to those who are impure and ignorant. Better give a knife into the hands of a baby, better place dynamite in the hands of a child, than give the supreme knowledge to those who are unworthy, and would wrest its powers to the

service of the lower self. For men who are ignorant, exoteric religion is enough. It is the school in which they learn the elements of right living and right knowledge. Hence in those days, both in East and West—while in the East Teachers still were to be found—men had to wander far and wide, undergo many a hardship and many a difficulty, travel long distances, face many a danger of desert, of wild beast, of flood, while they sought for the Guru, who was able to teach them, and counted all things but as dross if only Wisdom might be gained. You find men wielding power, men who are ministers of great Kings; nay, you find Monarchs themselves coming down from their thrones, casting aside sceptre and royal robe, putting on the garb, the cloth, of the ascetic, taking in hand the bowl, and wandering forth in search of a Teacher who had the gold of Wisdom, more priceless than the gold of kingly crown. Never the tradition vanished, never was the world without guides, albeit they might be hard to find. In the West the ancient knowledge was handed down amid great perils to life and limb, kept in memory by secret Orders that from time to time we find emerging from the darkness of history, and giving here and there

an indication that they had knowledge that the masses did not share.

There are those of you who know the tragic story of the Knights-Templars; those of you who have read of the frightful persecutions to which those Templars were exposed; who have read of the bones crushed into mere powder; of the limbs strained asunder by the dragging of the rack; of the red-hot pincers; and the fearful torment of the wedge driven between knees and ankles. And when you ask what were the accusations, what do you find? You find testimony: "We say, this man trampled on the Cross; we say that man trod upon the Crucifix;" and any of you who know something of the great Orders that still exist to-day, who are trained, say, in Masonic symbolism, and remember the details of your own initiation into Masonry, you will understand what was meant by the treading on the Cross, and you will realise the hidden truth that lay behind the apparently blasphemous action. And other things also you may learn to understand, if you take opportunities of gaining some of that hidden knowledge; and you will find that the old tradition never quite perished, that it never utterly died, that under many names that hid the objects, under many fantasies

that concealed the reality of the study, there were always men and women who were pupils of the true Teachers, and who risked everything that earth could give in order that the secret knowledge might be discovered, might be learned.

And so you come downwards ever, and find the world growing darker and darker, more and more materialistic, until you reach the nineteenth century and notice the tremendous growth of materialism. You have never had in the East the conflict between religion and science that marks European history. They have never been placed in opposition in eastern lands. Science, as we know it now, the study of all the phenomena of the outer world, that is the lower knowledge of which the ancient Scriptures teach. Nature is but the garment of God, natural phenomena, they are His language to men; and so you find Bruno teaching in the sixteenth century that Nature is God's language, that every natural object is a word spoken by God, and that if you study nature, if you learn to know the meaning behind natural phenomena, then God the Word is speaking to you through the outer form; thus shall science be a way to religion, and the study of Nature become the

revelation of the Supreme. He taught it in strange ways, under strange symbols, but the truth is there. Alas! religion then would have nothing to do with science; it racked its teachers, burnt its prophets, slew its messengers; and so there grew up in the minds of the men of knowledge a hatred against the religion that silenced them when they fain would have spoken of truth. Oh, when we speak of the opposition of science to-day, we who have learned the value of religion, never let us forget that in the past it was the religion of the day that tore out the tongues of Vanini and many another, so that no words might come from the mouth whereby the truths of science might be taught! And these things leave bitter memories; these are handed down from generation to generation. Then blame not science too bitterly, that when it came to its own, and was able to hold itself safely against the threats of the Churches—blame it not if it rejoiced to find anything which could be used as a stone to cast at religion, and that the memories of the Inquisition, of the stake and of the rack, were flung back as contempt and hatred as science grew strong and religion grew weak. And so we find in Europe, in the nineteenth century, an immense growth

of materialism; not always a declaration that the materialistic philosophy was accurate, but the far more subtle and therefore more dangerous allegation that man had no means whereby he might find out God. Agnostic was the name that was chosen—without knowledge; but what knowledge? Clearly not the knowledge of science, clearly not the knowledge of the objects of the phenomenal world; but *the* knowledge, the supreme knowledge, the Gnosis that the Greeks had followed, the Parāviḍyā that had been known in eastern lands. Man, they said, had senses—by these he might study objects Man, they said, had mind, whereby he could draw conclusions on the observations he had made. But beyond the senses and beyond the mind there was nothing more whereby knowledge might be gained by man, and therefore he could not know that which was beyond the observation of the senses and the reasoning power of the mind.

And into that materialistic world, into the midst of that circle of Agnostics that had gathered together into it well-nigh all the names most honoured in the world of modern thought, into that came a Messenger from the ancient Masters of the Wisdom; into that world

there came alone a woman, that greatest, that noblest, of women, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. Alone she came, and proclaimed again in that world the existence of great Teachers whom she declared that she knew. She made no pretence of great discoveries of her own making; "I but teach what I have been taught" was her continual proclamation. But she committed the great sin, the intolerable offence, of declaring to an ignorant world: "I know," and *that* they could not bear. Fraud they called her, cheat they called her, swindler they called her. Mockery and ridicule—these were the least of the imputations that they flung at her; and she, a woman of noble birth, proud, intensely proud, of her honour, of her truth, of her good name, she would rather a hundred times that they had burned her, like Bruno, at the stake, than that they had tortured her with foul accusations and soiled her honour with imputations of fraud and of disgrace. But she *knew*; her feet were on a rock; and she found an old friend of older days, that gallant soul whom you knew as Henry Steele Olcott, not full of knowledge as was the direct Messenger of the Lodge. How often have the older among you heard him say in

his frankness and straightforwardness: "I am no philosopher. You must not come to me for teaching." And yet he knew so much more than many who are proud of their knowledge of philosophy, and have a long train of letters after their names of the learned Societies to which they belong. And those two, the American man and the Russian woman, they stood alone against a world in arms. And she poured out the knowledge that none then living had the power to test. She prophesied of scientific discoveries twenty years before they were made. Now science is beginning to justify her; now some of the statements ridiculed and scoffed at are given out as great discoveries by Fellows of the Royal Societies, and other learned people in the European band of those who claim the name of scientists. You can find them in her work *The Secret Doctrine*, so that none can declare that she did not proclaim them long ere western science had rediscovered them. She told us that there was a hidden science, an occult science, the science that used to be taught in the Mysteries, the science that the Ṛṣhis passed on to Their pupils; she told us that there were still Masters and that she knew Them; she told us that the Teachers could be reached by those

who were willing to fulfil the conditions, and to bring the ancient sacrifice of all that earth can offer in exchange for the treasures of the Wisdom; she told us that the gateway was not shut; she told us that open was the road to the Masters; that she had trodden it; that she knew it to be true. And not only did she declare that, but out of his own personal knowledge Henry Steele Olcott declared the same. Then she took pupils in order that she might train them in the knowledge that she had acquired, so that when she passed out of her worn-out, broken body, they might carry on the testimony that she had given; for never again was the world to be left for many centuries to come without one or more who could say: "I know," who no longer said: "I think," who no longer declared: "I believe," who no longer proclaimed: "The Church declares it, or tradition affirms it"; but who would say fearlessly, despite a mocking world: "I know the Masters live, for I have seen Them; I have been taught by Them; I have been led along the Path to which They alone can give admission."

And so when she was called away, she left behind some of her pupils who had been led by her into the presence of the Masters,

who could speak of their own knowledge and not by hearsay from another. Not yet the time of peace for them; not yet the time of general acceptance and of easy living. But which think you is the better: with strong hand to make the road wherein others shall travel easily in the future, or to wait until others have made the road and then walk along it with unbleeding feet? It seems to me that to open up the way, to face the hardships, to trample smooth the road with bleeding feet where the generations of the future shall walk unafraid—that is the work which appeals to the soul that is heroic, that is the fascination that beckons to the one who loves the work of the pioneer. Let others take the easy way when the road is ready. Let some of us come forward and make it, in order that future men may walk there unfraid. And so some who in the past had known the great Masters, who in previous lives had lived with Them and served Them well, were gathered into the Theosophical Society; and at first the Society as a whole was meant to be the Open Road to the Masters. The Society was told: "Make up your mind about the Masters." They called Themselves then the 'Elder Brethren,'

and They loved the name of Brother more than the name of Master. Our reverence has given it to Them: They did not ask it for Themselves. And the choice was put before the Society, whether it would or would not acknowledge the Masters as its guides. "Leave us," one of Them once wrote, when advice was offered to Them which They were unwilling to take, "leave us to steer our Theosophical ship." But people were not willing that They should steer it; people thought they knew better what was good for the world than the Masters of the Wisdom knew; and so they determined that no such declaration should be made by the Society as a whole. It should not be allowed to declare that it was the servant and the messenger of the Masters of the Wisdom. And They retired for a time, as They had said They would, going back into the silence in which so long They had lived. Then H. P. B., at the order of her own Master, founded what you now know as the Esoteric Section. In 1888 that was founded, and she printed the statement that that was intended to fulfil the early purpose of the Society.

And so the Society went along its easier road of philosophy, metaphysics and religion—a

great and noble road—but only those who were willing to go further, and eager to go faster, were gathered by her into that band of disciples and offered by her the secrets of the Divine Wisdom. And ever since that day this Esoteric Section has endured, going through various phases, accommodating itself to the weaknesses of its members, often giving up an important matter because men were not yet ready for it, but ever going steadily, though slowly, onwards towards the appointed goal. And then a Master said: "Seek us through the Theosophical Society"; and only those who entered the Society were allowed to come onwards into the Esoteric Section; only those who took the first step were allowed to go further along the Open Road. The message went out to the struggling, striving, seekers: "There is an open road; there is an open way; no longer search in the jungle, in the desert, in the cave, for those who can teach you. Here is the open gateway to the path in the world of men; walk ye in it, and at the other end you will find the Teacher standing." And many came in, and, out of many, a few began steadily to walk onwards, seeking for the Master that some inner conviction told them must exist, more perfect, mightier, greater,

than they themselves and the men around them. And gradually, bit by bit, that inner intuition became a divine portion of knowledge, and the teaching was given out even to the world as to the way by which the Masters might be found.

And then we were taught that as They were the great Servants of Humanity, it was by the Path of Service that men living in the outer world might begin to tread the outer way whereon they should find their Teacher. Men were not asked to leave their ordinary avocations; they were not asked to come away from the market-place to the jungle, from the office to the desert. "Stay where you are," came the word of the Instructor. "Change your attitude, not your avocations; for avocations that help the world to roll along its everlasting ways are activities which are blest by God, and in them the divine action is carried on. Be a lawyer, be a judge, be a doctor, be a merchant, be what you will; but do it all for the sake of the divine law and as part of the divine activity." That was the lesson Theosophy began to teach. By Service, by unselfish devotion to the interests of others; by being willing to share your knowledge with the ignorant; by being willing to take your purity amid the foul; by recognising

the lowest as well as the highest as your brothers; thus may you gradually tread the path that leads to Initiation.

Those are the first steps. So long as any human being is despised by you, looked down upon and treated with contempt; so long as, when you would give money to the pariah, you take it and fling it on the earth because you think your purity will be spoilt if you place it respectfully and courteously in his hand; so long as men are bidden to go out into the road so that their shadow may not defile the ground on which you are going to walk; so long as the Brāhmaṇa is proud of his privilege and forgets his duty, so long the path of discipleship is not open to him.

You want to be the brother of the highest, the younger brother of the Elder Brothers of mankind? But *you* have younger brothers, younger brothers who are suffering, who are in pain and difficulty and distress, who are festering in the midst of dirt, whom none has ever taught to be clean and pure. There is only one Brotherhood, the Master at the head, the pariah at the other end; and if you would grasp the hand of the Master, you must stretch out your hand to the pariah. For the brotherhood will

not be granted to you which you deny to a fellow-man.

And so, Service is the first step. And then we have been told the Qualifications which we need when, striving to serve the world, we would tread the higher path, the path which is called that of probation. You may read of it, if you will, in Shrī Shaṅkarāchārya, where he laid down the conditions in Saṁskṛṭ terms familiar to every student amongst you. You may read it, if you will, in the recorded teachings of the Lord Buḍḍha, where, in the Pāli, you will find the names that match your own Saṁskṛṭ Hinḍū terms. You may read it, if you will, in the simple and beautiful language in which a child-disciple put down, as he remembered them, the wisdom of the Master who taught him, and placed in that exquisite little book, *At the Feet of the Master,* what the Hinḍū boy had learnt from one of the Masters of the Wisdom.

There is no lack of information. Take it in the form of scholarship, or in the form that a child can understand, you are told what to do. You must develop Viveka, discrimination between the real and the unreal, by which alone you can distinguish the passing phenomena from the eternal truths they veil and oftentimes distort.

Having learned something of Viveka, of true discrimination, then you come to Vairāgya, dispassion, desirelessness, indifference to the outer objects in the search for which men weary themselves both day and night. And when some discrimination is yours, when some dispassion has been reached, then you must try to bind round your forehead those Six Jewels of the Mind, which form the crown that you must wear as you approach the Portal of Initiation. You must learn Control of Thought, you must learn Control of Action, you must learn Endurance, for the way is long. You must learn Equilibrium, for there is nothing that must upset you. You must learn Tolerance, for you must see the Self in all. You must learn Faith in the God within you as well as in the God without. And when the Six Jewels are bound upon your forehead, then shall you be seen as ready to enter the Portal of Initiation. And when that happy day has come for you, when a Master has taken you under His personal care, has put you on definite probation, has accepted you as His chelā—child-disciple—then shall come the day when He and one of His Brethren shall take your hands in Theirs, and lead you up to the great Hierophant who shall give you the key of

knowledge, and allow the leaves of the Portal of Initiation to swing open before your eager feet.

Then shall you be taught, having gone through the Portal, that there are three weaknesses that you must get rid of. You must get rid of superstition, which thinks that the outer form is material or necessary to the Spirit, in order that he may make his way onwards. You must get rid of the delusion of the separated self, in which you know your self as other than those around you. You must cast away doubt, by knowledge of certain great truths—the knowledge of reincarnation, the knowledge of karma, the knowledge of the existence of the Path, and of the power to walk thereon.

And when those fetters are cast away, then the next Door is open before you, and then the great downflow comes which gives power of mind, and you are bidden, through the years that lie in front, gradually to bring the higher knowledge down into the lower mind, and to guide your feet by the light that streams from the Higher Self. And when that is gained, then the third Portal is before you. Then you have to cast away love and hatred, that is to say, that form of love which is attachment of the personal self to the personal self;

not the love of Spirit to Spirit, which is the foundation of the universe and the essence of God Himself; but the pair of opposites, as desire, as hatred—those are fetters to be cast away.

Then before you looms up the great fourth Portal, which has ever upon it marked the symbol of the Cross. Then you come to the gateway that none may pass through until he has known the loneliness of utter desolation; until friends have deserted him and enemies have assailed him; until thrown back on the Self within him, when no answer comes to the cry of anguish: "My God, my God, why hast *Thou* forsaken me?"—then, in that uttermost loneliness, he finds the Self, and never again can know himself alone; and he passes through the fourth Portal, and five are the final weaknesses that he must cast aside.

Words here are misleading rather than illuminative, because the names that are given to the faults in the lower world hardly indicate the subtle and refined weaknesses which are found as the Path is drawing to its ending and the Liberation of the Spirit is at hand. They speak of throwing aside desire for life in form, and desire for formless life. They speak of getting

rid of pride; they speak of getting rid of anger; they speak of getting rid finally of Aviḍyā, of ignorance. These are the last five fetters that hold the Spirit in bondage, and then the fifth gateway is before the triumphant combatant.

Then before the pilgrim who has trodden the Path, the razor Path, so far, there lies the threshold that admits to Liberation; beyond that there open the seven ways along any one of which the liberated Spirit may tread. And Those whom we call the Masters; Those to whom our hearts go out in deepest adoration and most passionate gratitude; They are the great Ones who, being liberated, have still kept the burden of the flesh upon Them; who, being free, bind Themselves by Their own loving will, and who declare: "Until the least of my brethren is ready for Liberation, I will dwell amid the men of earth and point the way to peace."

Over Their land shines out the Blazing Star, which is the sign of the highest achievement. In Their voice sound out the notes of music that touch the hearts of men amid the discords of the world. Theirs is the Light which clears up all obscurities. Theirs the Fire which burns up everything that is impure. And Theirs the Love, the love which regards each as a mother regards

her first-born child, and makes sacrifice a joy, bondage a delight, service freedom.

That is the Open Road to the Masters, and such, feebly limned, are the Masters who guide us on the road.

THEOSOPHY, THE ROOT OF ALL RELIGIONS

Friends:

We are to think to-day of Theosophy as the Root of all Religions. We saw in our first meeting that there was a supreme teaching which is the common heritage of all spiritual men and women. In our second gathering we learned that those who would find their way to the knowledge of God should take advantage of the help of the Elder Brothers of our race, and should follow Them along the road that Their feet have already trodden. To-day I would try to show you that while the principles are one, the manifestations are many; that while the supreme knowledge, the knowledge of God, lies at the root of every religion that has exalted man's intelligence and purified man's emotions, we can find underlying the various forms of religion certain fundamental spiritual verities which are built on the

one foundation—the knowledge of the Supreme. Now Origen, one of the greatest early Christian teachers—who is only not called a 'Father of the Church,' nor given the prefix of 'Saint,' because his thought was wider than the thought of the orthodox and his wisdom very much profounder than the wisdom of the later Church—the great teacher Origen declared that no religion could be safely founded unless there were Gnostics among its members. And as you remember yesterday, we saw that the Gnosis was the Greek form of the supreme Wisdom, the Mysticism of the West, the Brahma Viḍyā of the East. Origen pointed out that every religion had the duty of instructing the ignorant, had the duty of guiding the thoughtless, of bringing medicine for those who are sick with the disease of sin. But not out of the ignorant, the blind, and the sinful could the foundations of a true Church, a true religion, be made. And so we find that, at the beginning of each great Faith, there are certain Teachers who come out into the world, who always teach the same fundamental verities, who always proclaim the same unchangeable moralities, who always symbolise truth under the same ancient symbols. And They only differ in the externals of Their

religions, which are adapted to the genius of the people to whom They come, to the age in which They go forth into the world, to the special development characteristic of the people to whom They bring Their message—They give only a new form of the eternal truth, the Sanāṭana Ḍharma.

Looking back over the past, we see rising above their contemporaries certain mighty figures, the figures of the Founders of the great religions. And we find that These, while each of Them strikes His own note, teach what I have called the same fundamental verities. Each *does* strike His own note; there is a difference between the religions of the world in the predominance which each religion gives to one particular teaching or group of teachings. But those, rightly seen, ought not to be regarded as walls of division, but rather as the notes of some rich chord of harmony, every note adding a new beauty to the chord, so that not one of them could be dropped without an injury to the whole.

Let me remind you of what we found in our Theosophical teachings as to the notes of the great religions which are characteristic of the fifth or Āryan Race, that Race taking its birth

on the highlands of Arabia, and then coming to Central Asia for its definite establishment. It spread out over the whole of the western world —back to Arabia, to Egypt, along the shores of the Mediterranean, then to Persia, then to Greece, and from Greece over the rest of Europe; then again from the Caucasus outwards to north and west, until you find five sub-races there, with various subdivisions. Each of those has its own note, just as the Root stock, coming across the Himālayas into India, had its own note which dominates in a sense, the whole of the later teachings. We find that the note that was given to Hinḍūism, that most ancient of living faiths, was the great proclamation of the omnipresence of God, of the immanence of God in every object: "I established this universe with one fragment of Myself, and I remain." Out of that great teaching of a universal Life embodying itself in endless forms, came the correlative teaching of the ḍharma, the duty, that belonged to each group of the forms, so that the life in manifold embodiments might show forth the qualities necessary for a well-builded and healthy society; and so, on the basis of the Institutes of the great legislator, Manu, you had built up the deathless fabric of Hinḍūism, its polity and philosophy.

Then, when you go westward towards Egypt, you find the note of Knowledge was the note struck by the religion; to Persia, you find Purity is the predominant quality insisted upon; and does not every Pārsī to-day repeat, after the teaching of his mighty Prophet: "Pure thoughts, pure words, pure deeds"?

Then came the message to Greece, and Greece gave the religion of Beauty to the world. Rome took up the message, and spoke the word of Empire and of Law.

Then came the great religion of the Christ, proclaiming on the one side Individuality, the value of the individual, and on the other Self-Sacrifice—the duty of the strong to be the servants of the weak, the duty of the greatest to be as he that doth serve. And so note after note was added to the chord, colour after colour was added to the radiance; and not one note can be spared, not one colour can be cast aside; for as all notes make the chord and all colours make the whiteness of the light, so all the religions together speak out the one Truth of God, and in their many syllables the one divine Name is heard.

Now, that is a valuable fact. I make no apology here for the variety of religious beliefs,

for I assert that in that variety lies their great value to men. Men are of different temperaments, of different lines of thought; men are of different types, they are put together in different ways. Would you have religion one in its forms as well as one in its essence? Then tell the sun to send out but a single ray of colour, and make all the varied world one colour, because you only have one hue out of the white. Look round this assemblage, and you see many a colour gleaming out from the garments worn. Look at the sea behind us, and see the depths of its splendid blue. Walk over the gardens that surround you, and see the many-coloured beauty of the flowers. Look at the green of the banyan-tree and the many shades that other trees reveal. Whence do they all come? They come out of the whiteness of the light. Every object on our earth takes out of the white light the colours which it needs, and then reflects the remainder into the eyes of men; if all the colours were not in the light, you could not have the separate colours which depend on the varieties of the ways in which matter is aggregated. And so it is that, generally, the differences depend on the differences of the ways in which the human mind is built and the

human emotions expressed; the same light acts on them but by them is divided into many colours, and all the colours together give back the one white light. And if at night in some wonderful cathedral, where the windows were filled with many-coloured glass, you wandered outside the building, you would see the violet and the red, the orange and the blue, the green and the yellow, and you might say: "See how many are the colours, how many are the lights!" Go within the building, and one white light shines out, and the colours are the colours of the glass and not of the light. So the different religions vary in their presentment of truths, but the light of truth is one.

Now, is that only a poetical way of speaking, is that only the trick of the orator? Or does it represent a natural, a demonstrable, truth? Only by study can you answer the question to your own satisfaction. Let me point out the way of study, so that, listening for a moment to the Theosophical exposition, you may realise the facts on which that exposition is builded. There is no doubt for any educated person that all the great religions, living and dead, have taught the same fundamental facts. You may go, if you like, to comparative mythology, and collect together

all the testimonies that have been gathered from the excavations made by archæologists and antiquarians; and you will find that where they have dug into the surface of the earth, where they have unburied city after city—and sometimes they have dug down through eight and ten cities before the oldest one has been found—you will find that the things which they have brought out from the excavations, the things which had been made for and kept in temples, the frescoes painted on the walls, the fragments of ancient papyri and other literature, fragments which have been rescued from the tombs: that they tell the same stories, they teach the same doctrines, they proclaim the same moral precepts, they show the same symbols of religious truth. Two explanations are possible of this identity of teaching. One is the explanation given by the comparative mythologists: that all the religions of the world resemble each other because they all grew out of the ignorance of the savage, who personified the sun and the moon, the trees and the ocean, who saw a God behind every form, and then gave names to the Gods and formed a vast mythology. In later times, the comparative mythologists go on to say, the more learned, the more thoughtful, built philosophies

out of these ancient superstitions; human knowledge has refined the savage guesses, human growth has evolved more spiritual religions, and your comparatively modern religions, your philosophy, your refined ideas of God, the various doctrines of morality—they are only the beautifully evolved results of the growth of human thoughts and human emotions.

It is a defensible position at first sight. Why should not man have evolved in religion as he has evolved in everything else? The only misfortune is that the facts do not fit into the theory, and it is better to build a theory out of facts, than to build a theory first and then twist the facts to suit it. I appeal to history. Is there one of our great religions which shows any signs of evolving, so that in the teaching of the men of to-day it is greater than it was in the mouth of its Founder, and in the mouths of His immediate followers? You have your Upaniṣhaṭs. Have you in modern Hinḍūism, with all the "advantage of modern enlightenment," any who can write one sentence you can put beside the exquisite sublimity of those ancient books? You have commentators, you have grammarians, you have logicians; but they all deal with the knowledge of the past, and try

out of the thought of the present to find out what was meant by those ancient writers. Not one of them can touch the sublimity of the ancients; not one of them goes one step in morality beyond the teaching of the past. It was Vyāsa who taught: "To do good to another is right; to injure another is wrong." What morality has ever gone beyond that statement, or added fresh illumination to the words of the ancient Seer?

Is it not the same with Buḍḍhism? Will any-one pretend that the modern Buḍḍhist outdoes the Lord Buḍḍha in the depth of his wisdom, in the purity of his morality? Is it not the same with the Lord Christ? Is there one Christian who will dare to say that any modern religious men speak as He spoke, or that His pure and spiritual teachings are less refined, less spiritual, than those of the Christians of to-day? On the contrary, we find no evolution here, rather degeneration. Religions grow less powerful as generation succeeds generation; the Hinḍūism, the Buḍḍhism, the Christianity, of to-day are not as pure as the religions their Founders gave to the world, and none can bring forward a solitary fact to show this supposed evolution of religion.

What then is the other possibility? What I have just hinted at. That great Teachers come forward to reveal the divine Wisdom and they reveal always the same truths in different forms. What is the fundamental truth of all religions? There is one God. But the Hinḍū reads out from his Upanishaṭ: "One only, without a second." The Hebrew reads the declaration of Moses, his leader; "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord." The Buḍḍhist tells us of the Amiṭābha from whom all other Buḍḍhas descend. The Zoroastrian tells us of the supreme Ahuramazda who is the Creator and the Ruler of the world. The Christian proclaims: "There is one God, even the Father." The Mussalman day by day recites: "There is one God."

Every great religion, then, teaches in its Scriptures this doctrine of the unity of God. Some put it in a more philosophic form and some in a form more anthropomorphic; but that is according to the knowledge or the ignorance of the hearer, and not according to the essence of the truth.

Then we come to the next great doctrine, that God reveals Himself in a triple nature to the world. The Hinḍū tells us that Brahman is Sachchiḍānanḍa—Being, Intelligence and Bliss. The Zoroastrian teaches us of the three forms of

the revealed Deity. The Hebrew in his secret teaching again reveals a Trinity, and Egypt proclaimed the triplicity of God. Greece and Rome pointed to three supreme manifestations. Christianity speaks of Them as "the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit". But if you want to understand the unity of all, look at the qualities assigned to each in the Trinity, and you will find those qualities are always the same. There is the power that creates; there is the power that maintains; there is the power that draws all again into itself.

Does not the Mussalman speak of God as Creator? Does he not speak of God as Sovereign? Does he not tell us that all will return to Him, when he says: "All shall perish save His face"? And does it not seem as though that thought of the Mussalman were an echo of the ancient Christian teaching, that in the end all things shall return to God and God shall be all in all?

Pass on then from that doctrine to divine manifestation in the world; you find the doctrine of Divine Incarnation, whether it be in the form of the Hinḍū Avaṭāra; whether it be in the form of the Buḍḍhist, the Lord Buḍḍha; whether it be in the form of the Christian, the Lord

Christ; whether it be in the form of men whose Spirit is a fragment of the Divine Spirit; whether it be in the great Hierarchies of Ḍevas, the Angels and Archangels above us, or in the lower kingdoms of the animals, the vegetables, and the minerals below us. There is one Life in every form, and every form is a divine incarnation; in everything God abides, and there is nothing that can exist apart from His inspiring Spirit. If the Hinḍū is taught: "Thou art the ETERNAL," is not the Christian taught that the Spirit of God dwells in the human body? "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you," and you are "born of God"?

In this idea of God incarnated in forms, you find all the great religions at one; and if you would have a quotation from the faith of Islām, take that wonderful passage written in the Middle Ages, when none in the West save Islām had ever glimpsed the truth of evolution. You find the Islāmic doctor saying: "I died out of the stone, and I became a plant; I died out of the plant, and I became an animal; I died out of the animal, and I became a man. When did I grow less in dying? I shall die out of the man and become an Angel"; and then he finishes up

with the phrase I quoted: "All shall perish save His face."

And so we also find among the religions the doctrine of the evolution of intelligence, which is needed in order to make good the evolution of the outer form. I have just quoted that doctrine of reincarnation from Islām. I need not quote it from Hinḍūism, for all your Scriptures are full of it, and Hinḍūism could not exist without the central truth of reincarnation. Is it taught in the Hebrew faith? Turn to the book of the historian Josephus, and you will find a little band of Hebrew soldiers with their captain, surrounded in a fort, with overwhelming forces besieging the fort and no possibility of escape. Some of the soldiers began to murmur, asked to surrender; and their captain, when he wanted to persuade them not to dishonour themselves by surrender, appealed to the great truth of reincarnation. He said to them in effect: "If you dishonour your place, and shame your country, then will you be born again in low and shameful forms; die for your country, die in the fortress that you have been given to defend, and then you shall be born again in happy births and find the reward for which now you give your life." Now I recall that rather than a philosophical

teaching, for it shows you that among ordinary soldier-folk that doctrine was current. But was it taught by Christianity? Christ at least alluded to it when He declared that S. John Baptist was the prophet Elias. The early Church taught it in varied forms, not always in the most philosophic form, as it is taught in Hinḍūism and in Buḍḍhism, and in modern Theosophy. And that lay at the bottom of the Christian doctrine that seems to many of you so absurd—the resurrection of the body. Turn to Tertullian, an old Christian writer, and he speaks of many deaths and many resurrections of the body, and prays that he may attain to the final resurrection from the dead. In the early Christian Church the doctrine of the resurrection of the body was not the absurdity of the body which has gone to dust being gathered together again and built into the same human form; for then the earth itself would not contain material enough for the countless thousands of millions whose bodies have gone to pieces during its life-time. It was a resurrection of the Spirit in a new body, the transmigration of the soul into a new form; and so Tertullian spoke of many births and many deaths, and the final resurrection into a spiritual body, when death should have no

power over the liberated Spirit. So also you may read of it in Origen and in many another Christian writer of the early days. I grant it vanished; it vanished in those times of ignorance which came when the ancient learning of Greece and Rome was anathematised, and the new learning of the West had not yet made its way. But you can trace it down, generation after generation, in many of the heretical sects of Christendom that Rome sought to extirpate. It was taught among the Templars, it was taught among the Albigenses, it was taught among the Troubadours, the singers of France, and by many another sect denounced as heretical and excommunicated. It was taught in the time of Charles the Second in England by his own chaplain. I have a little pamphlet written in the time of Charles the Second, in which a clergyman of the Church of England says that this doctrine in the form of pre-existence is necessary to justify the ways of God. Then you trace it downwards to the German thinkers, through Goethe, through Fichte, through Schelling, through Lessing, through many another of the great German writers. You find it in poet after poet. Was it not Wordsworth who sang:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
The soul that riseth with us, our life's star,
Hath elsewhere had its setting,
And cometh from afar.

You find it in the more modern poets; in Browning, in Tennyson, in Rossetti, in the poets that are the glory of the England of the Victorian age. It has never wholly died away. It is coming back in these our days in the West, and never forget that Huxley, speaking of this doctrine, declared that it might claim the support of the great argument from analogy. And so we find that this is one of the doctrines of the Eternal Religion.

Then comes the great doctrine of Law. Whatever you think, and desire, and act, bears its fruit in life. None can escape the action of the Law. And a solemn word comes out from a Christian Teacher: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." It might be a Hinḍū speaking, for the clearness of the definition of the law of karma. Whatever you sow to-day, to-morrow you shall reap.

And then we come to the doctrine of the other worlds—the three worlds so familiar in the East and equally familiar in the West: the physical world in which we live, the intermediate world

into which the soul passes at death, the heavenly world into which it again passes onward, when in the intermediate world it has worked off some of the results of its transgressions. And, if I had time to do it, I could show you that you will find every one of these, the fundamental doctrines of religion, taught in the Scriptures of the great faiths, and you may study them there to convince yourself that what I say is true.

But if in these great doctrines there is unity, what about morality? There is only one moral law spoken out by the great Teachers. I quote it from the mouth of Vyāsa: "To do good to another is right; to injure another is wrong." That in the Hindū Scripture and in the Buḍḍhist has been carried out in many phrases, as also in the Christian, along the line of most instructive teaching, identical wherever you choose to find it. It is taught in the laws of Manu that forgiveness of injuries is one of the ten duties of man. It is taught by the Lord Buḍḍha: "Hatred ceases not by hatred at any time; hatred ceases by love." It is taught by the great teacher Lao-tze in China: "To the truthful man I will speak truth; to the untruthful I will speak truth also; and all shall become

truthful. To the loving man I will be loving; to the unloving man I will be loving also; then all shall become loving. To the liberal I will be liberal; to the miser I will be liberal also; and then all men will become liberal." If you come down to the time of the Lord Christ, you know His teaching: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." Why? Because the law of morality is changeless, like all other laws of nature, like all other laws of God, and because a wrong emotion can only be corrected by the opposite emotion, the right emotion which extinguishes the wrong. If you were in a laboratory, you could take two coloured rays of light and throw them on the same spot, and all light would vanish. You could sound two notes of music and arrange them so that the one extinguished the other; for the two sounds would produce silence. So you can choose rays of light, the one of which intensifies the other; sounds, the one of which intensifies the other. And so with emotion. If you meet a hate emotion with a love emotion, the love emotion extinguishes the hatred and there is peace. If you meet irritability with patience, if you meet wrong with

forgiveness, if you meet anger with gentleness and falsehood with truth, then the opposites extinguish each other and calm and equilibrium result, where otherwise strife would be. And so you learn why all great moral Teachers have taught the same moral doctrine, have declared the same precepts. And Theosophy, putting them all side by side and pointing to that perfect unanimity, after showing the teachings, gives the scientific reason, only because men no longer are willing to learn by the authority of the Holy Ones, but demand a proof that convinces the reason, a demonstration intelligible by the mind. And that is the only difference between Theosophical morality and the morality of all the great faiths of the world. We explain the reason where they formulate a command; and the only object in doing it is to suit the time, because men have grown sceptical. No longer is the authority of the Manu, of the Buḍḍha, of the Christ, an authority before which men bow their heads. They answer: "Why? Why should I obey? Why should I return good for evil? Why should I not give blow for blow, and curse for curse?" And so out of the treasures of the Ancient Wisdom the science of morality is brought forward as the

experimental demonstration of the truth of the ancient teaching.

Theosophy is nothing new; for in religion or in morals it gathers together out of the gardens of the past all the flowers of truth and the flowers of morality, and binds them together with the string of scientific demonstration, in order that men may obey in a sceptical and intellectual generation. There lies its value.

But there is one thing in which religions differ: they differ in their ceremonies, they differ in what we call their sacraments; they differ in their outer forms, in the customs they impose on their adherents. Now, Theosophy, as such, includes none of these. While it is essentially the Supreme Knowledge that we looked at the day before yesterday, while in a secondary sense it is the consensus of doctrine and morality everywhere accepted, everywhere taught, millennium after millennium; it does not embrace any rite, any ceremony, any sacrament, any custom—only the universal, the everlasting.

What use then is Theosophy to people of a special faith? It explains. Take a sacrament. The Hinḍū has his samskāras; the Buḍḍhist has his; the Christian has his; the Pārsī has his; the Mussalmān has his. What is a sacrament?

It is very well explained in a phrase that will be unfamiliar to most of you. I am taking it from a Christian catechism: "A sacrament," says the Church of England, "is the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." A perfect definition; and it goes on to say for the Christian, "ordained by Christ Himself"; that is the local application—the other is a universal definition.

There is always in a sacrament a *Material Object*. It may be the piṇda that you use in your shrāḍḍha; it may be the water that you use in your ṭarpaṇa; it may be the objects that the Pārsī spreads out after a beloved friend has passed away from earth; it may be the cord he ties round his waist, or the sacred thread thrown across the shoulder; it may be the water of the Christian baptism, or the bread and wine in the sacrifice of the Altar, in the Holy Communion. But wherever there is a sacrament there is a material object. Then there is a formula; we call it a *Word of Power*. It is the manṭra chanted by the priest; it is the sacred sentence spoken by the Pārsī mobed; it is the words of consecration spoken by the Christian priest. There is a gesture, a *Sign of Power*. It matters not what the religion; there are forms and signs

that each use to consecrate the material object, and following those a change appears. As the priest in the Roman Catholic Mass spreads out his hand over the unconsecrated wafer and makes over it the Sign of Power—like the Hinḍū muḍra—making the sign of the Cross above the wafer as he pronounces the Word of Power: "This is my body," in the Latin tongue, there comes down a flash of light; waves of radiance burst out from the consecrated object that fill the whole church with their glory, and the Angels come around to see the wondrous sight, and the great power of the Christ pours down upon His assembled worshippers through the consecrated symbol in the sacrament, which is the means of the spiritual grace.

So in your own ceremonies, when the manṭra is chanted, when the sign is made, when the object is set apart for divine service, and the symbol is traced on the stand where the image is to be; when the words are spoken that consecrate it, and draw the magnetism of the worshipped Ḍeva down upon that form—then, from that time onwards, the image is sacred; from that time onwards magnetism pours from and through it upon the worshipper; and all who

worship add to the sacred power, and thoughts play and interplay between the sacred object and the heart that seeks God. *That* is the meaning of a sacrament. All religions have them; all religions use them. And we Theosophists, we say that every one ordained by the man who knows is a means of grace to the worshipper, whereby the music of heaven comes down and harmonises the discords of earth.

And so to each religion we bring the explanation. To the Hindū we explain the mechanism of the shrāḍḍha; to the Christian the mechanism of his own sacraments; to the Pārsī, the Mussalmān, and the Hebrew, the way in which these powers work.

But Theosophy, as such, adopts none of them. "Let that which is the outer bridge," it says, "be trodden by those who belong to a particular faith; all bridges between earth and heaven are holy, and every religion has its own bridge, suitable to the souls that are born into the faith which has made that bridge. But when you find the way to the Highest in the supreme Wisdom, bridges are no longer needed. While you need them, use those of your own faith, and respect those of your brothers. But when you can find your own way to God, then, as the Dean of S. Paul's

was heard to declare: 'Why should a man in whom is springing up the water of everlasting life turn to the cisterns of the exoteric faith?'"

That is true; but because they are beautiful and useful and hallowed by the reverence of many generations, never let anyone who has grown beyond them speak one word against them to those to whom they are the bread and the water of life. Let not your wisdom mislead the ignorant, for you were ignorant in your day, and by these very methods you climbed to the knowledge you now possess. Therefore explain them; teach them; remove the superstition that injures, and gradually give the explanation that kills scepticism by knowledge, and superstition by knowledge also, and realise that divine Wisdom clothes itself in many ways, and that God gives Himself to every Spirit that loves Him in the form which suits the stage of the unfolding of the life.

There lies our use, and therefore has Theosophy been the reviver of religions everywhere. You know what it has done for Hinḍūism. You heard to-day the statement of a high official in Ceylon that the greatest agent in reviving Buḍḍhism had been the work of the Theosophical Society. You may find the same statement in

one of the books issued by the Government of India. You may find the same said by many who, by Theosophy, have been brought back to the faith of their fathers, and again are numbered amid the adherents of religion. You find it in the West in the growth of Mysticism, in the gradual rising above the letter that killeth and the realisation of the Spirit that giveth life.

If you ask when a man should drop the external form and trust to the Spirit within, my answer would be that when the form no longer helps: the ceremony no longer is a channel of divine life; when you feel up-springing within you the power of the hidden God; then the use of the ceremony for you is over, and its value lies behind.

What does the Sannyāsī do? He has come up through the twice-born; but when he breaks the thread and throws away the marks of the Brāhmaṇa, then he has become above all castes, because for him the value of the caste system is over. At last, when from the Spirit within you, there comes a law higher, more exacting, more compelling, than the law without, then trust the Spirit, for the ideal then will be stronger for you than the words of an outer code. But as long as the outer code is more compelling than

the inner force, as long as you need the crutch of a system without which you cannot walk, so long cling to the system, practise the ceremony; its use for you is not yet of the past.

And let me say one last word on this part of our subject: there is no country in the world where the spreading of Theosophy is so vitally necessary as on this vast peninsula of our Indian Empire. In India all the great religions of the world are living side by side. The vast majority belong to the Sanāṭana Ḍharma, the ancient faith of the Hinḍūs. But you have many others in your midst. You have some Buḍḍhists amongst you in India proper; and in Burma and Ceylon the mass of the population is Buḍḍhist. You have some Hebrews scattered over your land. You have some fifty millions of the children of Islām who belong to India. You have Christians who have lived here from the time of the second century after the beginning of the Christian era. Down the western coasts are Christian colonies that trace their history back to the second century after the reputed birth of Christ. Are you to cast them out? But they are Indians, as you are.

Twelve hundred years of life have given the Mussalmān a right to call himself a born Indian,

who has his own place in the nation. The Christian of sixteen centuries, he may well claim his place. The Buḍḍhist has nearly twenty-five centuries behind him, since the holy feet of the Lord Buḍḍha trod the Indian land. The Zoroastrian came to you when driven by persecution out of his own country, and you gave him welcome; you were glad to have him here; and though the Pārsī body be a small one it is respected and loved over all the Indian land. There is not one that you would drive away, if you could. There is not one of them who is really a foreigner in the great house of the Motherland, who stretches her arms of love around them all alike. She knows that there is not and must not be any outcaste in the Indian family, and the Indian Nation includes Hinḍū and Mussalmān, Buḍḍhist, Pārsī and Hebrew, Christian and Sikh and Jain; every one of the faiths is in your land.

What then will you do? Quarrel with each other, try to convert each other? You cannot; for the Hinḍū takes none into his fold who is not born Hinḍū. Is not the better way to understand? For, if you understand, you will love. Hatred grows out of ignorance, and when we do not know our brother we may strike our brother in the dark because we do not see his face. The

Christian in England may doubt the Hinḍū in India. The Mussalmân in Turkey may challenge the Christian here. *They* are separated by thousands of miles of land and sea; but *you* live side by side in the same street. You go in and out with each other; you meet each other in business, in society; you know each other; and you cannot hate if once you understand.

And so if you realise that all religions are one; if without calling yourselves Theosophists—I care nothing for labels—you take the Theosophic spirit that all faiths are one and all are ways to God; if you believe that great saying of Shrī Kṛshṇa: "Mankind comes to me along many roads, and on whatever road a man approaches me, on that road do I welcome him"; if you remember to think of it and live it; if you drop every name of hatred; if you never speak of the infidel, of the outcaste, of the melechchha; if you speak of "my brother Mussalmān, my brother Hinḍū, my brother Christian," ah! then India shall rise to what she ought to be—the model nation for spirituality, the model nation for religion; for all here shall live as children of One God, as travellers to One Home, sharers of One Hope. *That* is Theosophy, and that is the spirit that will make India great!

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, ITS MEANING, PURPOSE, AND FUNCTIONS

FRIENDS:

I ASK you now to turn your thought from the Theosophy that I have been expounding for the last three afternoons, to the Society, the Theosophical Society, with which I am to deal to-night. The Theosophical Society exists for the sake of studying and spreading Theosophy—to spread the thought that the direct knowledge of God is obtainable by man; to point to that open road to the Masters of the Wisdom which they may tread who will; to go about among the religions of the world pointing out their common basis and trying to evoke mutual tolerance by understanding. In those three subjects, as it were, you may see what we mean when we speak of Theosophy. Now, it strikes some people as strange that a Society that exists for the sake of studying and spreading Theosophy should not

make the acceptance of Theosophy a condition for admission into its ranks. Among the many queer things that people put to the credit of Theosophy, many, I think, regard this as one of the queerest and most eccentric: "You are a Society for spreading certain ideas, and yet you do not make acceptance of the ideas a condition of coming into your Society. How then do you expect that your members will spread them? what guarantee have you that your Society will succeed in the work for which it exists?" And the question is a very natural question. We are so accustomed to the imposition of creeds, we are told so often that we ought to believe this, or ought not to believe that, that when we come across a body of presumably sane people who are gathered together for a particular object, for the gathering, the studying, and the spreading of certain ideas, we might naturally say: "Well, you must make acceptance of these ideas a condition of admission." What would a Chemical Society be unless chemists were its members? What would be the use of a Geographical Society unless its members travelled over the world, extending the limits of our knowledge of geography? and so on. And we seem for a moment to stand

apart, with our absence of a dogmatic or credal basis on which our Society should be built.

And yet we have a very real, a very serious, reason for not asking from any human being, when he applies for admission: "What do you believe?" We do not ask of a man whether he is a Hinḍū or a Buḍḍhist, whether he is a Pārsī, or a Mussalmān, whether he is a Hebrew, a Jain or a Sīkh. We only ask him one thing: "Are you willing to accept our objects?" And the first of those is to form a nucleus of universal Brotherhood without distinction of creed, of sex, of race, of caste or colour. To live with men as forming a Brotherhood, that is the great object of the Society; and the other objects are to study comparative religion and mythology, to study the latent powers in nature and man. Such are our formulated objects. How do we suppose then that our members will come to accept Theosophy and to spread it? It is because we hold that no man should accept the formulation of a truth which he himself has not studied, and received because he sees it to be true. It is because we believe that the only condition of intellectual advance is the free exercise of the intelligence on every subject which is submitted

to it; because we think that to profess 'belief' without investigation shows an entirely wrong conception of truth in the human being, especially if that profession of a belief be imposed by authority, or be made a condition of gaining any advantage. Knowledge is not to be bargained with, truth is not to be bought. Whether you really believe a truth or not depends entirely upon whether you see it to be true; and you can only see it by using your reason to judge it, and by your own study assimilating it until it becomes part of your mind. Truth is seen the moment that, in climbing up the mountain-side of knowledge, you reach a point where that truth becomes visible to your eyes. What would you think of a man who, pointing to the mountain-side, before he would allow you to climb up it, said: "You must believe that when you reach half-way up, you will see such and such a town on the plain below"? The man would say: "Let me climb up it and then I will know whether or not there be a town on the plain you mention. I have never been there. I have never seen it. I do not care to take the statement on your authority, and until I have seen it there is no reason why you should demand that I should believe in its existence." As you

grow in knowledge, one truth after another comes within the sight of your intelligence. To profess to believe before you have studied is irrational and foolish. Study first; believe afterwards.

But you may say: "How are you sure that you will come to truth?" First, we have faith in truth; we have faith that it only needs to be seen in order to be accepted; and we think that is so, because man, by his constituted nature, has, as one aspect of his consciousness, the power of knowing, of cognising, that which is outside himself. His feelings are within him, internal changes; his will is within him, the self-determination to action; but his intellect has eyes which open outwards to the world around him; and as he is able to cognise, so he is able to know. "Its nature is knowledge"—so is it written in a Upaniṣhaṭ with regard to the intellect. You are a reflection of the divine Nature, and one aspect of that Nature is knowledge. Your divine aspect of knowledge answers to God in the outer universe, where He is veiled in the objects of knowledge. The God within looking out to the God without knows the objects, assimilates them, and reproduces them; but the condition of that is the free action

of the intelligence, without a bribe to lure and without a threat to paralyse. Hence, we are in favour of free enquiry, and we realise that truth is so great a thing, so answers to man's nature, which is truth, that when the truth within sees the truth without, the intellect is like the string which answers to a single note. As you tune the violin with another violin, or with the piano which is to accompany it, and as the striking of the notes is enough to know whether there is accord or discord, so the striking of the note of the truth in man by the fact without sounds out an accord or discord that the man can realise, for every falsehood is discord and every truth is accord; and when the without and the within answer to each other perfectly there is truth, and in no other way. That is one reason why we ask for no profession of belief.

There is another. We are evolving creatures; we have not reached the end of evolution; we do not know the whole of truth. Truth is infinite as God is infinite; and an infinite universe within us and without us stretches beyond all bounds of space or time. How shall we at this early stage of evolution, how shall we dare to formulate a truth to impose upon our brethren, when we only know a fragment of any truth,

and often know that fragment but imperfectly? We may make a statement of a truth. It is a milestone on the road of evolution. And as a milestone it is interesting; it shows the point to which human thought has travelled on some particular truth in nature; but the place of the milestone is on the side of the road to mark out how far a man has travelled; and if, instead of placing the truth as a milestone on the road, you take it and place it as a dogma, a barrier across the road, then how shall future generations win their way to higher truth and wider knowledge? They will have first to stop, and then to shatter the obstacle. We have done it, many of us, in the bitter day when we found that what we had been taught as truth was crumbling under the touch of reason, and breaking down under our feet like a rotten bridge in the hour of our sorest need. Shall we make this mistake again? We had to break the dogmas of our ancestors. Shall we make new dogmas for our posterity to break, and to suffer in the breaking as we have suffered? Rather let us trust the truth as we trust the sunlight. You do not need to prove the sun. It proves itself by illuminating every object on which it falls; and truth proves itself by illuminating the whole universe of

discourse. No proof is wanted for truth. It proves itself by its own inherent light. Hence among us no one speaks with authority of compulsion. The wisest cannot force the most ignorant to accept what he says.

Such then the general principle of the Society. It follows from it that what I shall say now as to its meaning, its purposes and functions are my opinions of its meaning, of its purposes and functions. They are not binding on any member of the Society here any more than they are binding on any stranger who for the first time may listen to my speech. No Theosophist is obliged to accept what the President of the Theosophical Society may state to be his or her opinions. They are for you to judge, for you to test, for you to accept or reject as you will; and I only claim such authority as comes from your recognition of the truth of what I say. If your mind answers to mine and sees the truth, then I may help you by having spoken out a truth that you held inarticulately within yourself, and only recognised when it was put into intelligible words.

Now, what is the meaning of the Theosophical Society? By the word meaning I intend to say significance, its place in the world. What does it mean, this strange new portent of a dogmaless

Society appearing in the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century? May I make you a picture which will show you what I think that its meaning is? Imagine stretched out before your eyes some great maps or charts of the world. Imagine that you are looking at those charts and that, instead of showing you mountain ranges and river-courses and the places where there are cities or forests or plains, these imaginary charts represent the currents of opinion, represent the thoughts of men, represent the movements to be found in the world of thought, represent the various religions now living among men, perchance also those of the past. Look in imagination at such a picture, and imagine that you may see there that every current of thought is given its own colour, so that you can follow it from the beginning to the ending; that every religion is marked by some special hue, so that you may see it rising, passing over the countries of the world, established in century after century mingling occasionally with other religions, influencing them, influenced by them, with many a rill of thought and tradition flowing into the main current of the stream, and perchance a little changing its colour by the admixture of another. Imagine that as you study with great

interest this wonderfully interesting map of human thought, you see the rising of a new kind of thought, of some new movement in literature, in art, in science, which makes its way among men. As you see these many streams and currents, a great network over the whole world, representing intellectual and devotional movements, imagine that you see that they all originate in some great Teacher, that each is coloured, as it were, by the colour of the Teacher, and so shows the line of its descent and its origin in the far-off past; and then imagine that you see these Teachers gathered together as men may gather in a great group or Lodge, and realise that all those Teachers and many others represent the great White Brotherhood composed of the Guardians of the race. You would see come down from Them the many impulses which modify and change the thoughts of men. You would see one stream of science flowing down into Middle Age Europe, meeting with many difficulties, gradually overcoming them, and growing wider and wider and the current stronger and stronger, until in the nineteenth century, as it were, it spreads out into a great lake, in which the waters are ready for the fertilising, for the irrigation, of the whole intellectual world. And

when you have looked at this and have studied it and grasped its wonderful meaning, then your eyes may be struck by a white line, pure and spotless white, that has its origin in the White Lodge itself, and flows out of that as a white stream in which all the colours have lost their distinctive hue; and you see it pure and white, although containing and blending all. You follow that white river as it flows down into the world of men; you see it stopping at one point after another and making, as it were, a lake here, and a tank there, and a pond in another place; but ever they are full of this white light-giving water, for it flows from the great Lodge which is its source, from which its light is taken; and you will see how it goes to one centre after another established in ancient times, where other Teachers from the great Lodge have been, and have made magnetic conditions for the spread of a new impulse of spiritual life. You would see it touching a religion, and the religion glowing out in brighter colour, brighter, but not losing its distinctive hue; and you would see it touch some part of science, and new discoveries would break out wherever that fertilising water touches; and as you trace it onwards and onwards, you would sometimes see a little

village which sends out many streams of this white light, and you would see a great town all dark; and gradually you would realise that you are looking at the Theosophical Society, and the great centres it has made in different lands; and some that are large have but little of this white current of light, and some that are small are shining brilliantly in all directions; and you would see that ever and always it remains in unbroken touch with its source, so that its flood can never be exhausted, so that the light from the living stream can never grow dim. And as you study that, a new conception will perhaps come up in your minds of the way in which the Lodge is working, of the way in which the great White Brotherhood is labouring; all comes from Them through many messengers, but this white stream of life comes from the Lodge as a whole, and remains as its vehicle in the world.

Drop my imaginary maps, and take another image. An embassy comes out from the King and carries his message to some far-off land. An embassy does not exist for itself; it exists for the sake of the King who sends it, for the sake of the country to which it carries his message. It is a message from a King to a friendly people. Such

an embassy to all the religions of the world is the Theosophical Society in its meaning; it brings a message from the great King; it comes to a country in order to tell its message; it has no object to gain for itself, no reward which it can claim for obeying its Ruler; it carries its message and proclaims it, and leaves it to be accepted or rejected as the particular nation wills. Such an embassy from the Masters of the Race is the Theosophical Society to the religions and nations of the world.

The idea is not a new one. When the Apostles of the Christ went forth—as sheep in the midst of wolves, He said—you may find that one of them, proclaiming His message, declared: "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us." It is a forecast of the world-wide mission of the Theosophical Society. The Society is an ambassador from the great White Lodge, and that is its meaning in the world, a messenger from the world's King for the helping and the enlightening of His people. You say that is a mighty claim, that is a lofty, almost audacious, claim? It has been made over and over again in the past by the embassies that have been brought by the messengers of the Lodge. Every religion

has justified itself in time, and we have no fear that this latest messenger shall not also justify itself, and prove that its claim is true. It has only been in the world for seven-and-thirty years; yet you find some four-and-twenty thousand men and women in all the countries of the civilised world as active working members in its ranks. We need not, I think, be ashamed of our growth in the time, if we remember the slowness of such growth in the past, and remember that we have come to a more sceptical generation than the world has ever known before.

And so we stand here as a witness to the great White Lodge. Henry Steele Olcott, our first President, was appointed, by that Lodge, President for life. When he lay on his death-bed he, at the command of the Masters who had appointed him, nominated his successor by Their authority. It was for the Society to accept or to reject that nomination from its real Heads. And in order that you may understand the meaning of that nomination, and the meaning of the answer made by the Theosophical Society all the world over, let me remind you that when the Society was first founded, it was founded in three sections, as they were called: the third was the mass of the members, the

second the pupils of the Lodge, the first the great Lodge itself, the Masters of the Wisdom. So you may read in its history as to its original foundation, as to the way it was organised in those early days of the movement. Founded by the Masters through their messenger, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, organised by their servant, Henry Steele Olcott, according to the will of the Masters it was organised with Them as the first section, the second the pupils, the third the men from the outer world who entered. That was swept away. Many came in who did not understand the meaning of the Society, and doubted the existence of the Masters, and then They declared that They would withdraw from the Society and leave it to steer its own way. And what They said They did; and the two upper sections disappeared, and only the third was left to carry on the work. So things remained—with the establishment that H. P. B. mentions in the *Key to Theosophy* of what was called the 'Esoteric Section'—until the death of our dear President-Founder. Then once more the choice was put before the Society. "Will you stand before the world accepting the nominee of the Masters as your Chief, or will you choose your own man or woman, and leave the

Masters' nominee aside?" And the Society answered by an overwhelming majority—far more than the two-thirds' vote required for the election of the President; it welcomed the nominee of the Masters, and gladly gave the constitutional sanction to that which had come to it from above. Only a few months passed over before the first and the second sections were again established, so that to-day we who know look to the Masters as the first section of Their Society, and Their life is ever spreading through it, and making it strong to know and to endure. There you find what to me, at least, is its meaning. Worthless would be a Society, from the spiritual standpoint, which did not bear some such relation to the great White Lodge.

And its purposes? Well, here again, naturally, differences of opinion will arise. But not on the first—Brotherhood. We do not pretend to establish a Brotherhood. A Brotherhood of Man exists by virtue of the One Life which develops in all alike. There is no stone on the road, there is no plant growing out of the earth, there is no animal that breathes the breath of life, there is no human being in whom intelligence is developed, that is not rooted in the One Life, and does not draw its existence

from Him. Remember the words of the great Scripture of the *Gīṭā*, where it is written: "There is nothing, moving nor unmoving, that can exist bereft of Me." Nothing can exist in God's world save by God Himself. There is none other life but His life, none other consciousness except His Consciousness, none other will save His Will, in course of evolution in us. You are willing to recognise that in the highest Ḍeva; you are willing to see it in the loftiest Archangel; I tell you that if God were not in the grain of dust, there is no reason to believe that He is in the loftiest Archangel, for all are but as passing shadows in the eyes of the ETERNAL, fragmentary manifestations of His own inexhaustible life. On that is based universal Brotherhood. Who are we that we should make it—we children of a day, we who only live by Him? We are not so proud as to pretend to make the Brotherhood that lives in and by the Eternal One alone. We only recognise it; and by recognising it we hope to spread the recognition of the Brotherhood among men. That is our humble task. A nucleus we say; not even *the* nucleus, but only *a* nucleus of universal Brotherhood; for, just as the nucleus of the cell is that through which the life-forces manifest, so do the

life-forces that build this great Brotherhood seek to manifest through the Theosophical Society, and every one who comes amongst us is added to the nucleus, and one more child of man is recognised as united with the whole. So our purpose is primarily to spread the recognition of Brotherhood, based on the recognition of the one and only life. And that is why, because it is a common doctrine among Hindūs, Dr. Miller, as I told some of you the other day, quoted as the great debt of the world to Hindūism the doctrine of the immanence of God—that God is in everything—and therefore the solidarity of man. There is no other solidarity but that in Brotherhood. Intellect divides us; desires divide us; material possessions divide us; everything divides us but the one spiritual life which we have in common; and so we realise that only by recognition of that life can recognition of the Brotherhood be gained, and in declaring the immanence of God we also declare the Brotherhood of man. That then is our first purpose.

The next, to teach the brotherhood of religions. Religions have been the greatest cause of strife in all the world. It used not to be so in the elder world. Of old its religions were national. Every nation had its own faith,

or a group of nations united in one. There were many faiths, and God had many names; no man wanted to fight his neighbour's religion unless he was fighting to seize his neighbour's country; and the desertion of the religion of his country was regarded more as treason to the State than as heresy in matters of opinion. Difficulty only began when a religion arose which claimed to be a unique revelation and to cast doubt on the other religions of the world, while claiming supremacy for itself. Then came persecutions and hatreds and struggles, the use of thes word as an instrument for making a man believe—the most unsuitable instrument ever devised by the folly and cruelty of man. And so now we reproclaim the ancient teaching that all religions are branches of one tree, the tree of divine Wisdom, and that just as this banyan tree throws down its roots and starts afresh, from every root that is struck into the earth, so it is true of every branch of the divine Wisdom, that it sends down roots into the soil of the human heart and makes a new centre whence a new branch spreads further. For the divine Wisdom is the spreading banyan tree, and the great Lodge itself the trunk from which the branches come forth and strike their roots into

the world. And truly indeed is it the tree of life whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. Human brotherhood, brotherhood of religions—there you have two of our purposes, and our function is to spread these over the world.

Then comes another purpose, and that next purpose is to substitute Idealism for materialism, to substitute science for blind credulity, to substitute knowledge for faith, to substitute Mysticism for formalism.

The other day we had a letter from England, telling us that a Roman Catholic priest, introduced to a lady who was a Theosophist, made the remarkable statement: "Well, materialism is dead and buried, and that's due to your lot." I do not say the phrase was very poetical, but it was very expressive, and that a Roman Catholic priest should declare that the death and burial of materialism in the West was due to Theosophy, shows that we have carried out that part at least of our mission.

To substitute Mysticism for formalism. Look again over the western world and see how Mysticism is making its way, is reviving the ancient Churches of Christendom and giving them new strength, new life and new unity

among themselves. The mystic view which substitutes the authority of the God within for that of the religion without—that is another of the purposes of the Theosophical Society and it discharges its function as it carries out that work.

It substitutes science for credulity—not the science of phenomena, which is already in admirable hands, which is being pursued by what Clifford well called "the tireless patience of the investigator," and is advancing with giant strides. The marvellous work done in the study of the phenomena of our world; the advances made by the efforts of scientific men; the splendid light they have thrown upon the workings of nature—all this is being admirably well done; and while we cannot forget that one or two of the most eminent of those discoverers have been members of our Society—while we cannot forget that Mr. William Crookes, now Sir William, drew from the teachings of the Master the great ideas which made him teach the genesis of the elements, and led him to be one of the greatest lights of the scientific world of to-day—still we gladly give to that noble band of scientists full credit for their marvellous discoveries, and thank them for the self-denial and

labour which have illumined modern thought with the light of modern science.

Our special work is to give to science the great help of bringing within reach other worlds than the physical (for they are material worlds as much as the physical world is material), pointing to the possible development of new faculties whereby those worlds shall be observed by scientific methods; bringing them the results of the discoveries we have thus made, as when we issued the book, *Occult Chemistry*, not expecting scientists to accept it because some of us have seen it, but placing it on record, so that, when the scientists of fifty years hence have discovered what we have seen, they may see that the Theosophical Society was the pioneer even in material science, even in the study of phenomena.

But far more precious than that is the real science, the science of the soul, the science of the Spirit. Well is it to study the phenomena of the changing world, but far better is it to study the truth of the unchanging Spirit, and to know the relation of man to God and of God to His universe at large. The science of the Spirit is as accurate, as definite, as clear as any science of phenomena, and it has been the glory

of Theosophy to carry that science to the West and to revive that science in the East.

I do not pretend that we have brought it to you; but you had forgotten it. Is it no service, when people have lived long in their family house and there is some old chest covered with dust and put away in some out-house where no one goes, to go to that out-house, open the chest, take out the family jewels covered with dust, clear away the dust, and give them back to the family that owns but has forgotten them, so that they may wear them in all their beauty in the face of the world? That has been the service rendered by Theosophy to eastern lands, where the jewels were forgotten, but have again been brought to light.

It is written in an Upaniṣhaṭ that a man may walk over a field not knowing of the gold that lies beneath his feet; so has the divine Wisdom spread by the Society opened up the vein of gold beneath the earth on which you were treading, and shown you the treasures of golden ore that lie in the depths of your hearts. Such then is the work, the purpose of this movement.

Then we come to another purpose which many amongst us do not yet accept, but which is none the less true for some of us: To

serve as a means of collecting together materials suitable for the sixth sub-race, that out of it the sixth Root Race may grow. The researches of the past show us that Vaivasvaṭa Manu gathered the materials for His fifth, or Āryan, Race out of the fifth sub-race of the Atlanteans, on one of the islands left by the huge convulsion of two hundred thousand years ago. He gathered them together; He led them away from their home. Gradually He led them upwards into Central Asia, far to the North, to the borders of the Northern Sea. There He kept them; there He trained them for a while; took them, after some years, to the Gobi Sea, wherein the White Island was situated, and there they settled for long, long years of growth.

From that, the beginning of the Root Race, He gradually sent out sub-race after sub-race; the first, the Root Stock itself, ultimately came down into India; the second spread into Egypt and Arabia and South Africa; the third spread into Persia; the fourth, the Kelts, into Greece and Southern Europe for the most part; the fifth, the Teutonic, more to the North; and the sixth is yet to come. It is already appearing in America, where H. P. B. told us to look for the appearing; and you may read, in the Report

to Government of the leading ethnologist of America, of the signs and marks of the development of a new type which will be the American type of the future, or one of the American types.

The sixth sub-race is gradually to be built up, and our Theosophical Society is the gathering together of the souls that have taken part in the founding of other sub-races, and will be called upon ere long to take part in the founding of the sixth. Out of that the sixth Root Race will grow, when the new Manu—He whom we know as the Master M.—will come to build His colony, as the Lord Vaivasvaṭa Manu built His in days gone by. Scores of thousands of years will pass away, probably, ere that Race will be ready for its new continent, and the continent will be ready for it. But already in the Pacific—where H. P. B., before there were any signs of it, said the continent of the sixth Root Race was to arise—already it is arising, as the geographers tell us. Volcanic outbursts making islands, throwing up mountain peaks—until to-day in scientific associations they discuss the danger of the uprising of a new continent, and the huge tidal waves that they fear may desolate the earth. Be not afraid; Nature is not going to move

in such a hurry; Nature takes her time over her work. I dare say there will be some tidal waves, sweeping away perhaps hundreds or thousands of people; but the Race will not die and cannot die, and only the old bodies will be slain that the men in them may pass into better bodies to live in nobler surroundings. I cannot go into details, but many of you know the details of which I am just giving the rough outlines.

This is one of the purposes of the Theosophical Society, as I was told by the Master, who is to make this gathering of a Race. He said that you could not to-day segregate people as they could be segregated in the past; that you could not lead people into some far-off country and shut them up there from the races of the world. Steam-boats, trains, other methods of communication—to which now are added aeroplanes—make such a physical segregation impossible. It is segregation of thought rather than of bodies, and the thought is Human Brotherhood, which is to be embodied in our sixth Root Race; a co-operative civilisation instead of a competitive; a brotherly civilisation instead of the plunder of the weak by the strong.

That is the broad idea, and the Theosophical Society has that for one of its purposes, and,

whether many members believe it or not, it matters not, since it is part of the divine Plan.

And then another purpose, which is only believed in as yet by a small minority, is that it is to serve as the herald of the coming Teacher and prepare His way in our mortal world. Not by one voice, as by that of John Baptist in the past, but by thousands of voices from many lands is the coming of the great Teacher to-day preparing. By hearts full of love, full of devotion, by study of the signs of the times which leads to knowledge, more and more of our members are realising that this also is one of the purposes of the Society, and this function is also to be discharged. Now the Teacher will come and go; the great Teacher will appear as he did in Judea, and again pass away from earth—I hope not by cruel murder as then in the past. And in order that a welcome may be secure, in order that His sacred Person may not be slain by an angry mob or a cruel ruler, the way is being prepared by His messengers, so that He may dwell longer, if He will, in the human world.

Such messages have before been given, but never have they been received by a majority of

the men of the time. We are told a message about a local flood was sent out in the days of Noah; but only Noah and his own family escaped in the ark, for all others mocked and jeered at the message, until the flood was upon them and it was too late to escape.

In the days of the Christ Himself, a few faithful hearts proclaimed His coming, but the mass of the people would not have Him, because He was not shaped into their likeness, and did not fill up the crude thought-form which they had created for His embodiment.

I know not if the world have grown wiser through the last two thousand years. I know not if, when again the Supreme Teacher comes, He will find the people as blind, as foolish, as they were when He trod the roads of Judea and was despised and rejected of men. He Himself said that every religion slew its own prophets and built sepulchres for the prophets of past generations. It may be that the world will again do that; it may be that here in India, the people who revere Shrī Shaṅkarāchārya—and rightly revere that mightiest Teacher—will cast stones, as it were, again, when the World-Teacher comes among them. It may be that the Christians, with their particular thought-form

as to the nature of the Christ, will have naught to say when His exquisite presence again illuminates the darkness of our world. Who may tell?

After He has gone, the Theosophical Society will carry on His work, will spread His message, will strive to labour along the lines He shall lay down. But to-day before He comes; to-day, while still His message is not accepted; we now proclaim His coming and, like our predecessors, we declare that He is near, well-nigh at the door.

You may say: "What right have you to proclaim it?" So said your predecessors to my predecessors, Messengers of the same great Lodge. You say: "It is bold, proud, audacious, to say you know what others know not." But such has ever been the message of the Messengers, and rejection has ever been the fate awaiting them. Why should it be otherwise with the modern Messengers? why should they be believed when their predecessors were rejected? why should they be accepted when the world aforetime refused to admit the existence of the Lodge or to welcome its greater Messengers?

Nevertheless we who know are bound to speak; none the less we who know are bound to pass on

the message we have received. We are not the King, but we *are* His heralds; and no earthly voice shall silence the mouths which have been told to proclaim His coming.

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